



LARRY CROUSE



REPRESENTATIVE LARRY CROUSE

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Appropriations Subcommittee on
General Gov't and Audit Review;
Commerce and Labor;
Select Committee on Pension Policy

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1-800-562-6000

**Legislative Hotline for
the hearing-impaired:**

1-800-635-9993



• Representative Larry Crouse •

Dear friends and neighbors,

Happy New Year from Olympia! I hope you had a safe and happy holiday season. I am back in Olympia for the 2008 legislative session.

This year, the Legislature holds its 60-day session from the middle of January to the middle of March, and I am continuing to address issues important to residents of the 4th District:

- rising health care costs
- rising property taxes
- education and community safety

I also plan on being a voice of reason on state spending. This session lawmakers will have to work hard to control state spending that has increased 32.4 percent in four years. By controlling spending, we can control taxes.

I am your voice in Olympia and your ideas and input are essential. Please keep the calls, e-mails and letters coming. I wish you all a safe and happy 2008.

Sincerely,

Larry Crouse
Representative
District 4

2008 SESSION PREVIEW

To constituents of the 4th Legislative District

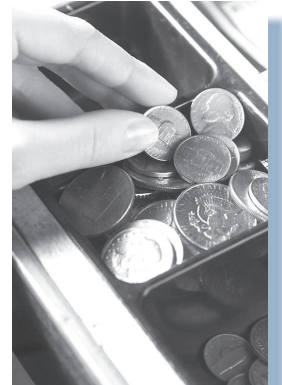
REP. LARRY CROUSE • DISTRICT 4

THE BUDGET

Over the last few years, we have seen a real surge in our economy. However, we have seen an even greater surge in government spending. Following the 2003 legislative session, state spending was at \$25.2 billion. That number is now \$33.4 billion – a 32.4 percent increase in just four years.

In late December, the governor released her supplemental operating budget for 2008. The supplemental budget should only address unavoidable expenditures and respond to emergencies. While money was directed to help the flood damaged southwest corner of the state, a total of \$144 million in new spending was proposed.

The governor's office already predicts a \$600 million budget shortfall by 2011. The bottom line is we need to control spending in Olympia.



I-747 AND PROPERTY TAXES



In 2001, voters approved Initiative 747 that implemented a maximum 1 percent property tax levy increase annually. This fall, the Supreme Court struck down I-747, saying voters did not understand what they were voting for. In late November, a special session of the Legislature was held to uphold the will of the people and reinstate the 1 percent limit.

While I believe reinstating the 1 percent limit was the right thing to do, I also believe the Legislature did not go far enough to alleviate the growing property tax burden. Many homeowners in the district have seen enormous property tax increases over the last few years. So much so that low-income families and seniors on fixed incomes are on the verge of losing their homes. This session the Legislature must address the property tax crisis in our state.

HEALTH CARE: IMPROVING ACCESS AND CONTROLLING COST

I plan on working with my colleagues to control the rising cost of health care by putting the patients back in control, not government. Government's involvement has led to overregulation and mandate-heavy insurance plans that are driving up cost. Government should be reforming the private health-insurance market to provide individuals and employers with insurance products that meet their specific needs. Individuals also need information about the cost and quality of health-care services, which allows for informed decisions, creates market pressures and lowers prices.



Some stats for the state:

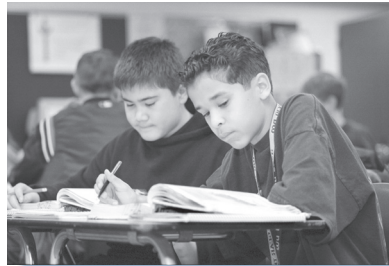
- 9.1 percent of the population is without health insurance
- 1.3 percent of children do not have health insurance or are not eligible for a current government health insurance program
- 50 percent of the uninsured are in the 19-to-34 age group

2008 SESSION PREVIEW

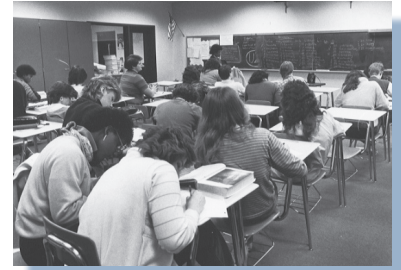
ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS

It is important we have an education system that allows parents, communities and state officials to know that the basic task of educating students is accomplished. The system of assessments currently used to gauge this are the WASL and approved alternatives. I am encouraged by the great work of our public schools in improving student learning and working to ensure student success. Our system has taken great strides toward focusing on student learning and those who have been at risk of falling behind have been the greatest beneficiaries of this emphasis.

As lawmakers, we have a constitutional obligation to ensure basic education is provided for all. Some suggest that funds are insufficient or are being used unwisely.



Instead of answering these questions, the state's \$1.8 million study of education funding ended up recommending a handful of new state-run programs and another two-year study. It is unfortunate that the opportunity to truly evaluate the education system has been missed. It is time for the studies to end and the state to fund the fundamentals—the classroom, transportation, extra costs, and levy equalization.



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

Safety is a theme that is front-and-center this legislative session. I am working hard to ensure we address sex predators in our communities.

I have co-sponsored a number of bills that will help, including requiring all level 3 sex offenders be monitored

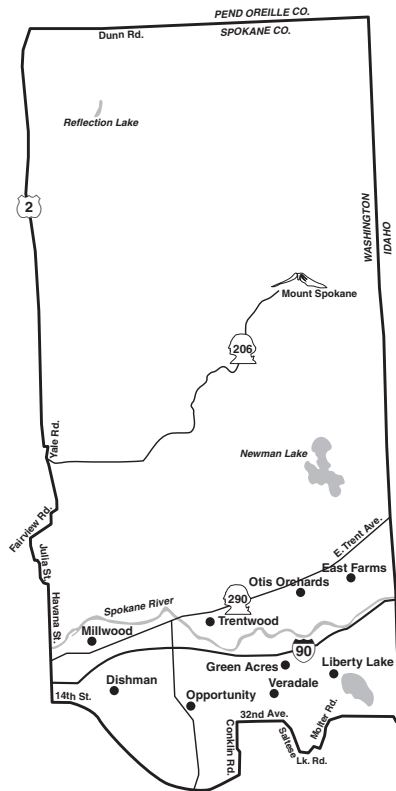


with GPS and ensuring that all registered sex offenders have submitted a biological sample for inclusion in the DNA identification system.



Rep. Crouse serves as the ranking Republican on the House Technology, Energy and Communications Committee.

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**ISSUES, IDEAS,
CONCERNS?**

**4TH
LEGISLATIVE
DISTRICT**

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